



COPS in Action

Community Oriented Policing Services

www.usdoj.gov/cops/

Norman, Oklahoma



Norman, a town of 100,000 just outside of Oklahoma City, is Oklahoma's third largest city. The Norman Police Department (NPD) adopted community policing in 1993. With the receipt of a COPS hiring grant in 1994, they were able to increase their sworn force by eight and assign officers to each of the town's thirteen beats. The department has since received a COPS MORE grant to hire civilians to take over some of the administrative duties of officers, making them more efficient and allowing them to spend more time on their beat. In total, NPD has received \$850,000 to hire or redeploy twelve officers to their 126 member sworn force. At this time, all of the grants have expired and the NPD has absorbed the costs of the positions. Each of the officers and civilians has been retained.

Community policing officers are permanently assigned to one of the thirteen districts that comprise Norman. The officers patrol the area and work with community members to address crime and disorder problems at a neighborhood level. Officers in geographically compressed districts often use bike patrols and go door to door to introduce themselves to residents and business owners. Officers use their contacts with the community to identify problem areas and determine community needs. Each quarter, officers evaluate the progress that has been made in their district and reassess the needs of that district. This responsiveness to the community has been extremely well received. Residents know the names and faces of the primary officers assigned to their area and often come to them to voice concerns about public safety, neighborhood nuisances, and crime.

Officers in the downtown and retail areas have forged alliances with merchant associations. Officers attend meetings to talk with store owners about crime prevention. With businesses moving from the downtown centers to highway accessible and mall loca-

tions, merchants have a vested interest in keeping the area maintained and crime free in order to encourage development. The merchants help officers combat the crimes associated with juveniles and homeless people congregating around unoccupied businesses.

NPD has also formed an alliance with the school district through the Police/School Administrator Taskforce. The taskforce includes representatives from each of the area schools and the police department. They meet to discuss persistent juvenile crime problems and develop comprehensive approaches to combat them. The police assist each school in updating their emergency plans and prepare them to respond to instances of school violence.

Norman is not a crime ridden town. The NPD's aim is to maintain their high quality of life. Their success is evident in the crime statistics and the community's overwhelming response to community policing. Despite population increases, violent crime has decreased steadily since 1995. 1998 marked the first time in fifteen years that Norman has not recorded a homicide.

"The COPS grants have had a tremendous impact on our department. They have provided us with **resources** to work with residents to fight crime and maintain the high quality of life in Norman."

Chief Phil Cotton, Norman Police Department

Contact: Sergeant Glen Dobry, 405-366-5249